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## The American Pectoral Sandpiper in Africa

by P. J. G. Ginn & R. K. Brooke

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The American Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* (Vieillot) is a rare winter visitor to Africa. It has been collected at Lake Naivasha in Kenya on 11 May 1952 (Williams 1952) and at Rondevlei, Cape Town in South Africa on 25 March 1965 in company with the Little Stint *C. minuta* (Leisler) (Middlemiss 1965). There are a few published sight records: Oulidia on the coast of Morocco on 22 and 23 September 1963 in company with Dunlin *C. alpina* (L.) and Curlew Sandpipers *C. ferruginea* (Pontoppidan) (Smith 1964); near Casablanca, also on the coast of Morocco, on 1 October 1963 in company with Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* (L.) (Smith 1964); Heany in Rhodesia from 2 to 4 April 1949 (Editor 1949); Bathurst District on the coast of the eastern Cape Province of South Africa in company with Little Stints and Curlew Sandpipers on 3 and 24 April and on 1 May 1966, and with Ruff and Wood Sandpipers *Tringa glareola* L. on 3 December 1967 (Tree 1966, 1971).

P. J. G. G. obtained a female in fresh nuptial plumage on 25 April 1971 at Toromoja (quarter degree square 2124BI) on the Botletle River in Botswana. It was in a flock of c.10 Curlew Sandpipers on the river bank of which a male in winter plumage was also collected. The American Pectoral Sandpiper was collected as it was believed, in view of its straight bill, to be a Reeve. However upon examination it was realised that this was not the case. A study of Ridgway (1919) and of Witherby *et al.* (1943) shows that in fact an American Pectoral Sandpiper was collected. The critical points are: white shaft of the outermost primary; outer four pairs of rectrices of virtually equal length and the two inner pairs substantially longer, particularly the central pair (distance between tips of the four outer pairs and the innermost pair when the tail is held closed 9.5 mm); the eyestripe is not well developed and does not extend behind the eye; breast feathers dull dark brown broadly edged with pinkish buff; no fulvous on the flanks. All these characters show that our specimen is not the Siberian Pectoral Sandpiper *C. acuminata* (Horsfield) which despite its more westerly breeding range has not been taken in Africa. Our specimen has a right wing of 128, left wing 129.5, culmen (exposed) 25, tail 63, tarsus

25, middle toe without claw 23.5 mm, weight 59.75 g, gonads small. It is now in the National Museums of Rhodesia in Bulawayo.

This is the first record of the American Pectoral Sandpiper from Botswana and the second collected specimen from southern Africa. It will be noted that all records of this species in Africa are of single birds, usually in company with other related waders. The only inland records are the specimens from Lake Naivasha and Toromoja and the sight record from Heany which Smithers *et al.* (1957: 19) doubt. In view of their distribution within the continent it would appear that birds breeding in eastern Siberia and in eastern North America may come to Africa and that they may do so more regularly than has been supposed. The species will, no doubt, be reported from other parts of Africa in due course.

We are obliged to Mr. R. Boulton, Director of the Atlantica Research Station near Salisbury in Rhodesia, for the loan of Ridgway (1919). He concurs in our identification.

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[At my instance, and with the agreement of P. R. Colston, a specimen of *Calidris melanotos* collected at Fort Simpson, North-West Territories, Canada, in September 1862 was donated from the University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge to the National Museum, Bulawayo. M. P. Stuart Irwin has duly compared it with the Botswana specimen discussed above, which he confirms is correctly identified, the wholly white shaft of the outermost primary in particular being diagnostic—Ed.]

## Notes on the identification of eggs, egg mimicry and distributional history and the status of the form *serratus*, in the parasitic *Clamator* cuckoos

by C. J. O. Harrison

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### Summary

The blue eggs of several *Clamator* species are very similar. In some cases two species are sympatric in distribution, and the collected eggs show an overlap in size and shell-weight. It is not possible to identify specifically these eggs with certainty and since it is also likely that field identification is fallible, information based on collected specimens should be used with caution.

The parasitic cuckoos of the genus *Clamator* have eggs which, over most of their range, mimic those of the normal host species in colour and pattern, showing parallel variation in some African localities. In southern Africa, however, eggs of *C. glandarius* and *C. j. serratus* do not resemble those of the